

### **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions and listings of the claims in this application.

#### **Listing of the Claims:**

1. (Original) A fuel injection valve for an internal combustion engine comprising a nozzle fixed to a leading end portion of a nozzle holder, with the nozzle being configured such that a nozzle needle inserted into a guide hole inside a nozzle body is guided by the guide hole and moves in an axial direction to open/close an injection hole,

wherein at least part of a gap formed between the nozzle needle and the guide hole has a tapered shape that widens toward the nozzle holder.

2. (Original) The fuel injection valve for an internal combustion engine of claim 1, wherein the entire gap has a tapered shape that widens toward the nozzle holder.

3. (Original) The fuel injection valve for an internal combustion engine of claim 1, wherein the tapered shape of the gap is a linear tapered shape.

4. (Original) The fuel injection valve for an internal combustion engine of claim 2, wherein the tapered shape of the gap is a linear tapered shape.

5. (Currently amended) The fuel injection valve for an internal combustion engine of claim 1, ~~2, 3, or 4~~, wherein the gap has a tapered shape as a result of a tapered portion being formed in at least the guide hole.

6. (Currently amended) The fuel injection valve for an internal combustion engine of claim 1, ~~2, 3, or 4~~, wherein the gap has a tapered shape as a result of a tapered portion being formed in at least the nozzle needle.